

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 LAB-04 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08 INR-10  
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INFO AMCONSUL CALGARY  
AMCONSUL HALIFAX  
AMCONSUL MONTREAL  
AMCONSUL QUEBEC  
AMCONSUL TORONTO  
AMCONSUL VANCOUVER  
AMCONSUL WINNIPEG

UNCLAS OTTAWA 3622

PASS DEPT OF LABOR, ILAB

E.O. 11652: N/A  
TAGS: ELAB, CA  
SUBJECT: QUEBEC-ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS DISPUTE

REF: OTTAWA 3197; 3271

1. SUMMARY. WHILE TEMPERS RISE, SATISFACTORY PROVISION HAS NOT YET BEEN MADE FOR EMPLOYMENT OF NON-RESIDENT CONSTRUCTION WORKERS UNDER QUEBEC'S NEW HIRING REGULATIONS FOR ALL CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. CABINET-LEVEL OFFICIALS OF BOTH FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENTS ARE SEARCHING FOR A SOLUTION TO THIS PROBLEM BEFORE IT GETS OUT OF HAND.  
END SUMMARY.

2. FOR THE MOMENT, THE DISPUTE ARISING OVER THE JULY 1ST APPLICATION OF A RECENT QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION LABOR HIRING  
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LAW CONTINUES TO SIMMER, AS THE VOLUME OF RHETORIC RISES. THE REGULATIONS UNDER THE QUEBEC CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY LABOUR RELATIONS ACT COULD DENY EMPLOYMENT TO MANY QUALIFIED CONSTRUCTION WORKERS RESIDING IN ONTARIO (OR ANY OTHER PROVINCE). AT THE MOMENT, THE PROSPECT OF AN ONTARIO RESIDENT BEING DENIED A JOB IN QUEBEC HAS BEEN POSTPONED IN HULL (ACROSS THE RIVER FROM OTTAWA), WHERE CONSTRUCTION

WORKERS BEGAN A TWO-WEEK VACATION, AND AT OTHER BORDER SITES WHERE NON-QUEBECERS ARE PERMITTED TO CONTINUE WORKING WITHOUT A CERTIFICATE UNTIL THE JOB IS COMPLETED. HOWEVER, THERE ARE DETAILED PRESS REPORTS OF ONTARIO WORKERS BEING ORDERED OFF QUEBEC SITES.

3. TECHNICALLY, A NON-QUEBEC RESIDENT CAN OBTAIN A WORK PERMIT FROM A PROVINCIAL LABOR OFFICE IN QUEBEC IF CERTIFIED AS HAVING WORKED A MINIMUM OF 1,000 HOURS AT HIS TRADE DURING THE PAST YEAR. FURTHERMORE, AT LEAST THREE-QUARTERS OF THE TRADESMAN'S HOURS WORKED MUST HAVE BEEN WITH THE CONTRACTOR WINNING THE BID TO WORK IN QUEBEC.

4. PREMIER WILLIAM DAVIS OF ONTARIO ISSUED A STATEMENT, WHILE INTRODUCING A RETALIATORY BILL IN THE ONTARIO LEGISLATURE, BEFORE ADJOURNMENT ON JUNE 30TH, SAYING THAT "...THE SPECIAL PERMITS FOR NON-RESIDENTS, INCLUDING ONTARIANS, WHO ARE MEMBERS OF AN EMPLOYER'S 'REGULAR WORK FORCE' ...." ARE "...LEFT TO THE UNCONTROLLED DISCRETION OF QUEBEC OFFICIALS. MOREOVER, WE HAVE BEEN TOLD THAT THAT CONCEPT WILL BE LIMITED TO 'KEY MEN' WHO HAVE LENGTHY PERIODS OF CONTINUOUS EMPLOYMENT WITH A SINGLE EMPLOYER. HENCE, THIS SO-CALLED EXEMPTION PROVISION PROVIDES NO RELIEF TO ONTARIO TRADESMEN WHO CANNOT MEET THESE STRINGENT SERVICE REQUIREMENTS." PREMIER DAVIS CONTENDS THAT THE QUEBEC REGULATIONS ARE UNCONSTITUTIONAL AND HAS ASKED THE UNCLASSIFIED

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FEDERAL GOVERNMENT TO TAKE THE MATTER TO THE SUPREME COURT. THE NATIONAL BUILDING TRADES SECRETARIAT OF CANADA HAS ALSO ASKED FOR A SUPREME COURT RULING.

5. PRIME MINISTER TRUDEAU, HOWEVER, HAS ACKNOWLEDGED QUEBEC'S RIGHT TO LEGISLATE IN THE AREA OF LABOR RELATIONS AND HAS ASKED ONTARIO AND QUEBEC TO MEET TO ARRANGE A COMPROMISE. CONSEQUENTLY, FEDERAL MINISTER OF LABOR JOHN MUNRO HAS BEEN MEETING WITH THE PROVINCIAL MINISTERS OF LABOR, BETTE STEPHENSON OF ONTARIO AND PIERRE-MARC JOHNSON OF QUEBEC, IN AN ATTEMPT TO REACH A SOLUTION. MEANWHILE, LOCAL LABOR LEADERS AND ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION CONTRACTORS ARE REPORTED TO BE GRUMGLING EVEN MORE LOUDLY.

6. COMMENT: QUEBEC'S NEW CONSTRUCTION HIRING REGULATIONS ARE BEING DISCUSSED AT THE HIGHEST LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT AS THEY COULD TRIGGER AN EMOTIONAL CLASH BETWEEN ONTARIO AND QUEBEC OUT OF PROPORTION TO THE NUMBER OF ACTUAL CITIZENS INVOLVED. HERE TOO IS AN OMEN OF WHAT MIGHT BE EXPECTED IN SOME KIND OF NEW ASSOCIATION BETWEEN QUEBEC AND ITS NEIGHBORS. IF ALLOWED TO GROW, THIS PROVINCIAL DIFFERENCE COULD PROVE VERY TROUBLESOME FOR BOTH THE PARTI

QUEBECOIS OF QUEBEC AND THE PROGRESSIVE CONSERVATIVES OF  
ONTARIO.

7. NOTE: NOT RELATED TO THE QUEBEC HIRING REGULATIONS IN  
THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY BUT WORTHY OF NOTE IS THE  
UNSETTLED STRIKE OF 14,000 ONTARIO CARPENTERS THAT BEGAN  
JULY 4TH, WHICH DOES NOT AUGUR FOR A CONCILIATORY ATMOS-  
PHERE AMONGST ONTARIO CONSTRUCTION WORKERS. ENDERS

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## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** CONSTRUCTION, LABOR DISPUTES  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
US Department of State  
EO Systematic Review  
20 Mar 2014  
**Markings:** Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014